

HR & LEADERSHIP FOR STARTUPS

THE HR & LEADERSHIP
NEWSLETTER BY FUTURELEADS

STARTUP

RESTART: RE-DESIGNING YOUR COMPANY CULTURE



FutureLeads
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The biggest threat to your company's culture is a time of crisis, a period when you are getting crushed by the competition or are nearing to bankruptcy. All is revealed when something happens.

Bit of controversial but very insightful look offers Ben Horowitz, famous Silicon Valley entrepreneur: imagine your company downfall – imagine you've gone bankrupt:

- Were you a great place to work?
- What was it like to do business with you?
- Did your encounters with people leave them better off or worse off?
- Did the quality of your products make you proud?

Every founder feels like he is working against the clock: market demand needs to be tested, new product features are overdue, and the competition's always breathing down your neck. And what is usually one of the first things that will be thrown under the managerial bus? Effectively dealing with people you work with, because many think that employee happiness and teamwork chemistry just happens without a hard and conscious work of leaders and founders.

COVERED IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

- WHAT IS A COMPANY CULTURE
- WHAT YOU DO IS WHO YOU ARE

IN PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS:

- [THE HR DEPARTMENT CHECKLIST FOR STARTUPS](#)
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WHAT IS A COMPANY CULTURE

Modern companies tend to focus on metrics like goals and quarterly numbers, but they rarely ask why all their employees come to work every day. Is it for the money?

The glue that binds a company culture is that the work must be meaningful for its own sake and people must feel good there, because of the work they do and people they work with.

Many of us have experienced few cultures already as each company has its own, unique one. However, **very limited number of people know how to build the company culture intentionally and succeed with it.**

Lots of cultures are just somehow build over time, nobody really knows how – most of the people believe that the company culture is driven by the personality of their owners or CEOs, but do they really have such a power to influence how you feel daily at work and how decisions are made even on the lowest level of the company hierarchy?

The best definition of company culture I have ever found is that:

A company culture is a set of actions.

This was defined already by samurais in ancient Japan – and it helped rule Japan for nearly seven hundred years....

Company culture is not a single decision – it **is a code that manifests itself as a vast set of actions taken over time.** No one person takes or makes all the actions.

WHAT YOU DO IS WHO YOU ARE

Action-oriented nature of culture is not based on values, because values are more like aspirations or beliefs.

That is why so many efforts to establish corporate values are not successful, because culturally **what you believe means nearly nothing.**

What you do is what matters and makes difference.

Company values usually say “what” but **you rarely find the reason “why” behind each value,** however **the “why” is what gets remembered** and leaders should emphasize it in every possible occasion to make it stick.

It is impossible to design a bug-free culture, but it is vital to understand that the most dangerous bugs are the ones that cause ethical breaches.

Spelling out what your organization must never do is the best way to protect your company against them.

And again, **when it comes to ethics, you have to explain the “why”.** In the other words – if you win in the wrong way, what do you actually win?

Ethics are usually about hard choices. **A cultural design is a way to program the actions of an organization,** but, like computer programs, every culture has bugs. But cultures are significantly more difficult and complex to debug than programs...



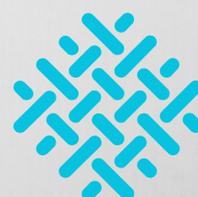
There is no fits-to-all HR solution – all depends on which phase is your company at, how many employees it has, how far and how fast it plans to grow, what problems you are facing, what skills and competence you have and need, how is positioned on the market, and how it wants to be perceived and valued, both internally and externally.

One of the solutions can be to hire Strategic HR partner who can advise you as you go or you can temporarily hire an Interim HR Manager who will become part of your company for a while to not only help you map your situation and set priorities, but the manager will help you design and create proper solutions and tools based on your needs, given situation and future aspirations.

STRATEGIC/INTERIM HR MANAGER can help you in the following areas:

- Map your current situation and recommend priorities and areas where to focus on and how to best handle them step by step
- Advisory, coaching and HR mentoring for business owners, founders and managers on how to best approach and act in different HR areas and situations
- Design and develop HR processes, policies, tools and solutions for talent acquisition, onboarding and adaptation, employee training and development, performance management, remuneration and employee relations, retention and satisfaction
- Provide managers and teams support to increase the level of collaboration and employee engagement and cooperation, including training for managers and teams
- Active involvement in creating company culture, employer branding, including internal and external communication design and set up
- Create new HR team, or train and support your current HR team

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